

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2068

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**As Passed House:**  
February 15, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to creating the imagination library of Washington program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the imagination library of Washington program.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Children, Youth & Families (originally sponsored by Representatives Stonier, Abbarno, Bronoske, Dolan, Ryu, Santos, Sells, Wylie, Orwall, Rule, Harris-Talley, Wicks, Gilday, Valdez, Bateman, Taylor and Kloba).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Children, Youth & Families: 1/31/22, 2/2/22 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/15/22, 89-7.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to select a qualified nonprofit organization physically located in Washington to create and operate the Imagination Library of Washington Program that would contract with a national nonprofit foundation that exists for the purpose of working with local entities to identify eligible children and mail age-appropriate, high quality books each month to those children at no cost to families.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Harris-Talley, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Eslick, Goodman, Ortiz-Self and Wicks.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Klippert and Young.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

*Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.*

The Dollywood Foundation, a nonprofit organization located in Tennessee, established Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (Imagination Library) in 1995 for the purpose of sending books to children from birth to age 5 and their families at no cost to the family. The Imagination Library partners with local affiliates. For example, the United Way of Lewis County and the Lewis County Rotary Foundation sponsor the Imagination Library program in Lewis County, Washington. The local affiliate programs enroll children in their area while the Imagination Library negotiates wholesale pricing for the books. The local affiliate programs pay the cost that is negotiated for those books and the shipping fees.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), in coordination with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), must select a qualified nonprofit organization physically located in the State of Washington to create and operate the Imagination Library of Washington Program (ILWP). This nonprofit organization must:

- manage the daily operations of the ILWP;
- establish affiliate ILWPs across the state;
- advance and strengthen the affiliate ILWPs with the goal of increasing enrollment in those ILWPs;
- develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness campaign to make donors aware of the opportunity to register children from birth through age 5 in the ILWP and make the public aware of the opportunity for these children to receive books through the program; and
- contract with a national nonprofit foundation that exists for the purpose of working with local entities to identify eligible children and mail age-appropriate, high quality books each month to those children at no cost to families.

The Washington nonprofit organization selected to operate the ILWP must provide payment to the national nonprofit foundation that equals 50 percent of the cost to provide books to eligible children enrolled in the program. Each affiliate program must provide payment to the ILWP that equals the remaining cost to provide books to eligible children. Nothing in the bill requires that state funding be provided to the nonprofit organization selected to run the ILWP or the ILWP itself.

The DCYF may seek and accept gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private sources for the ILWP and may spend any gifts, grants, or endowments or income from public or private sources on the ILWP according to their terms.

The nonprofit organization operating the ILWP must submit a report to the Legislature and the Governor by November 1, 2022, and annually thereafter describing:

- the number of affiliate programs established by the ILWP;
- the number of children enrolled in each affiliate ILWP; and
- the number of children statewide enrolled in the ILWP.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This program has been wildly successful. Please work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or as the Legislature works from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., to make this happen. This is something that should be done "just because you can."

This is a good little bill. It creates an administrative nonprofit structure that allows children to get books at no cost to families. There is no request for public support for this bill— just creating the process for local entities to work with the national foundation.

Dolly sends greetings and appreciates the consideration of this legislation. Nothing is more foundational for a child than that child's ability to read. If children are to be reached before starting school, children need to be reached at home. Some children do not have access to books, and this bill addresses that issue.

The OSPI supports creation of this program. There is current one-time funding for this program and would like this program to continue.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) These programs have been wildly successful with engaging local partners and children. It is magical to watch a child's excitement and growth following receipt of books in this program. This is a timely program given the realities of pandemic learning.

This program is a golden tool. Everything is to be gained from programs like this where children are invested in.

The DCYF requests inclusion in this bill to coordinate with the OSPI in selecting an entity to manage this program.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Monica Jurado Stonier, prime sponsor; Nick Federici, United Ways of the Pacific Northwest; Norrine Briggs, The Dollywood Foundation; and Anna Hernandez-French, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Other) Brooke Fisher-Clarke, Washington Imagination Library Expansion; and Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.